



UNLOCKING CIRCULARITY AND MARKET POTENTIAL FROM WOOD WASTE

POLICY CONFERENCE



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March 25, 2026, 10:00-16:00 CET

THE SQUARE - Convention Centre Brussels, Belgium

Context and objectives

Europe is aiming to pioneer the Circular Economy fostering higher resilience, competitive growth while lowering emissions and environmental impacts, underpinned by the **Bioeconomy Strategy** (published November 2025) and the upcoming **Circular Economy Act** (expected September 2026). **Wood recycling for material use is a working circular model** and a prime showcase for European industry. The EcoReFibre project has demonstrated that fibreboard recycling from wood waste is technologically and economically viable at the industrial level and is ready to boost the market.

Nearly 47 million tonnes of wood waste are generated in the European Union (2022). Yet only around 40% (15 million m³ solid wood equivalent) of EU wood waste is being recycled today, while about 60% is used for energy recovery. The focus must be on **upscaling high-quality waste supply at volume and on creating circular business models and markets** to enhance the wood panel industry's leading role in Europe.

- **Latest solutions and policy trends:** The policy conference will showcase innovative developments and upcoming solutions to advance and scale wood and fibre recycling and reuse across the industry. It will present the latest insights into the EU policy landscape and emerging trends.
- **Discussion forum on circular wood use:** All key target groups will be represented and engaged in the debate, including European and national policy makers and authorities, industries along the whole value chain, and other important stakeholders from civil society.
- **EU policy recommendations:** In parallel workshop sessions, stakeholders will advocate their views and positions and help codesign actionable policy recommendations and research needs. These will be compiled in a report to the EC as direct input for the upcoming *Circular Economy Act*.

The Brussels policy conference is organised by EcoReFibre to disseminate the project results and **support policy development in the wood, circular economy and biobased sectors**. The goal is to facilitate future adoption, integration and mainstreaming of innovative circular solutions, positioning Europe's forest-based sector right in the heart of the Circular Bioeconomy.

The conference will bring together stakeholders from policy, industry and civil society, to collectively reflect on the implications and enhance the policy findings. Participation is free of charge and by invitation only.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Time	Topic
09:30	Registration & Coffee
10:00 (0:35)	Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome by: Matti Rantanen, EPF & Florence Kuijl, InnovaWood The Circular Economy Act: Stefano Soro, European Commission, DG GROW – Acting Director /& Head of Unit I4 for Sustainable Products
10:35 (0:30)	Setting the scene: the EcoReFibre project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main research results: Prof. Stergios Adamopoulos, Project coordinator, SLU Strategic Roadmap: Duarte Carvalho, EPF / Oliver Jancke, InnovaWood
11:05 (1:10)	Panel discussion: The needs of a circular wood waste market and evolving policy landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oliver Jancke, InnovaWood - panel moderation Adelaide Alves, Sonae Arauco - views of a major panel producer, EcoReFibre partner Martin Siewert, IKEA - views of a panel & furniture producer, Advisory Board member Omar Degoli, FederlegnoArredo - best practices and EPR schemes, EcoReFibre partner Christian Holzleitner, European Commission, DG CLIMA - Head of Unit for Land Economy and Carbon Removals Solène Gautron, European Commission, Joint Research Centre, New European Bauhaus Unit
12:15	First conclusions & introduction to the workshops
12:25	Networking lunch
13:20 Session 1 (0:45)	Workshop parallel sessions - two rounds, each participant can attend two workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WS 1: Governance and Policy Recommendations - Duarte Carvalho, EPF & Claudio Biondi, IW - Goal: link to Circular Economy Act, extend and rank roadmap policy recommendations
14:10 Session 2 (0:45)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WS 2: Market Uptake Pathways - Oliver Jancke, InnovaWood & Anthony Salingre, Steinbeis - Goal: address challenges, sketch out and rank recommendations WS 3: Research, Innovation and Skills Needs - Stergios Adamopoulos, SLU & Uwe Kies, InnovaWood - Goal: extend and rank roadmap R&I needs, synergy with NEB
15:00	Coffee break
15:15 (0:45)	Final wrap-up – rapporteurs deliver conclusions from sessions Closing Words with main takeaways – Kris Wijnendaele , EPF & Uwe Kies , Innovawood
16:00-18:00	Networking cocktail

ABOUT THE PROJECT



EcoReFibre – upscaling circular use of wood waste and fibre recycling in the European wood panel industry

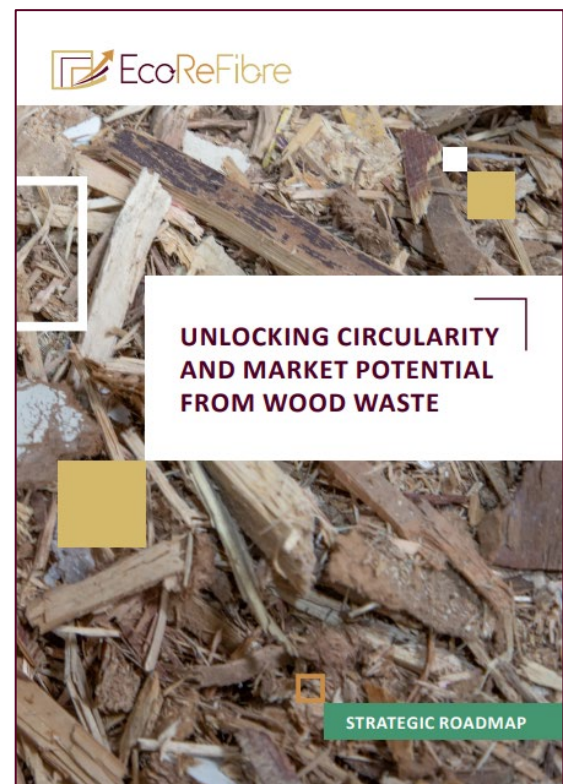
Funded with 12 million EUR through the Horizon Europe programme, the EcoReFibre project (grant no. 101057473, 2022 to 2026) brings together 20 partners from 7 countries and is coordinated by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). Its core mission is to explore smart technologies that enable **recycling of post-consumer wood back into fibreboards and novel building products**. In Europe, fibreboard is mainly applied for furniture (53%), laminate flooring (18%), and construction, including doors and flooring (13%). Lesser volumes are incorporated in packaging (6%), used for moulding (3%) or other applications (7%). Within the EcoReFibre project, **five industry pilots demonstrate how circular economy approaches**, combined with innovative and digital-supported technologies, ensure the supply of secondary raw materials. These pilots include the sorting and extraction of wood fibres and fines, and their conversion to valuable products, i.e. fibreboard and insulation products, particleboard and biocomposites. Ultimately, EcoReFibre aims to increase available wood resources in Europe through recycling. The ambition is to **substitute up to 25% of the virgin fibres** currently used in the European fibreboard market. The project further demonstrates how the upscaling of circular technologies can be achieved.

EcoReFibre Strategic Roadmap

The EcoReFibre **Strategic Roadmap** on unlocking circularity and market potential from wood waste describes the current context in Europe with a focus on fibreboard recycling. Fibreboard recycling has been proven technologically and economically viable at the industrial level.

To establish fibreboard recycling - and wood recycling for material use in general - as a working circular model, the focus must be on high-quality supply at volume and the creation of corresponding markets.

The propositions of this Strategic Roadmap are well aligned with the goals of the **EU Bioeconomy Strategy** and the upcoming **EU Circular Economy Act** and enable the wood panel industry to enhance its leading role in building a more resilient and competitive Europe. The Strategic Roadmap pinpoints challenges, drivers and barriers and sets out research and policy recommendations to support the transition from a linear to a circular economy. Its objective is to contribute to the ongoing discussion on circular wood use and showcase current developments and upcoming solutions, informing all relevant stakeholders and enabling greater wood and fibre recycling and reuse.



CONFERENCE HOSTS

EUROPEAN PANEL FEDERATION (EPF) represents the manufacturers of wood-based panels being particleboard, dry process fibreboard (MDF), oriented strand board (OSB), hardboard, softboard and plywood. EPF has members in 30 European countries. The EU wood panel industry has a turnover of about 25 billion euro every year and provides over 100,000 jobs in Europe. The production of wood-based panels in the EU-27 (+EFTA) in 2022 was an estimated 59.8 million m³.
europanel.org



INNOVAWOOD mission is to foster innovation and bring business benefit to the entire value chain from forestry to wood, to furniture and construction. InnovaWood provides a European platform to share knowledge, latest information and follow developments as well as innovative trends. InnovaWood aims to provide a strategic orientation to the European research and innovation ecosystem which is evolving in response to the global challenges.
innovawood.com



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